



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Purpose 10-15-2012

In accordance with the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, the purpose of International Social Service is to improve permanency options, including, but not limited to, placement for children in the NJ Child Welfare System, and to provide intensive family finding services for all children who have potential family connections outside the United States that have been developed and implemented.

Authority 10-15-2012

- N.J.S.A. 30:4C-12.1, Search for Relatives of Child in Custody of Family Services
- N.J.A.C. 10:122D, Services for Children in Out-of-Home Placement

Definitions 10-15-2012

"DCF International Liaison" or "DCF IL" serves as the liaison between DCF and ISS-USA. The DCF International Liaison:

- Is the key contact for DCF staff working with children with potential international family connections;
- Assists in all aspects of opening, managing, and closing a case with ISS-USA;
- Provides information to CP&P Workers on understanding DCF international protocol; and
- Receives all ISS referrals.

"Hague Adoption" or "The Hague Convention Protection of Children and Co-Operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (1993)" is a legal agreement between participating countries that regulates and safeguards intercountry adoption. The United States is a signatory to this convention and, therefore, must follow the established guidelines for intercountry adoptions. The U.S. Department of State is the central authority that manages all Hague Convention adoptions. In general, there are two goals of the Hague Convention:

- To ensure the best interest of children are considered with each intercountry adoption.
- To prevent abduction, exploitation, sale, or trafficking of children.

"International Social Service" or "ISS" is a nonsectarian, non-profit international social work agency with more than 350 caseworkers, specialists, legal counselors, and support staff in 140 countries. ISS provides services to children, families, and adults who encounter socio-legal problems around the world. They provide case management, technical assistance, and services as a key resource for obtaining and understanding necessary information to support the family plan, child placement, and permanency options. International Social Service-USA (ISS-USA) is the United States of America branch for International Social Service.

"International Social Service Case Manager" or "ISS-USA Case Manager" or "Inter-Country Case Manager" acts as the ISS-USA Case Manager for all cases coming from DCF. The ISS-USA Case Manager works with the DCF International Liaison, Interstate Services Unit, and ISS correspondents around the world to assist in completing the services requested by DCF.

International Social Service-USA and DCF Collaborative 10-15-2012

The Fostering Connections Act of 2008 requires:

- Relative notification within 30 days after the removal of a child from the custody of the parent(s);
- In person or written contact with identified relatives;
- Paternal and maternal relatives must be included for notification purposes, and any other potential caregiver identified as kin by the family;
- The State explain the options the relative has under Federal, State, and local law to participate in the care and placement of the child, including any options that may be lost by failing to respond to the notice;

- Emphasis on stability and permanency for children.

ISS-USA Services

10-15-2012

The services ISS-USA provides for children in the care of CP&P include:

- Criminal Background/Child Abuse Registry Check: Please note that not all countries have a child abuse registry;
- Child Welfare Check: A request can be made when a non-custodial parent, relative, or friend has concerns about a child living in another jurisdiction. A social worker makes a home visit to ensure the child is safe or present in the home. A child welfare check can be requested by anyone, and the child does not have to be in the care or custody of CP&P;
- Document tracing (birth, death, etc.): Finding any number of documents: birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates, adoption records;
- Home Study for Parental Custody: Completed Home Study on a parent to determine if the parent is interested, able, and appropriate to care for the child;
- Home Study for possible relative placement or visitation: Home Study being completed to determine if a relative is interested, able and appropriate to care for the child in a kinship type placement. If the placement is intended as an adoption, see definition of home study below;
- Home Study for adoption by a relative or non-relative in Non-Hague Countries: Home Study being completed for adoption purposes, except when the home study must be conducted in a country that is party to the Hague Convention on Adoption.
- Mediation: Coordinating mediation services for custody/visitation issues, child support, and child abduction;
- Post-Placement Follow-Up: Routine check on a child whom CP&P placed in another country;
- Protective Service Alert: Alert local law enforcement and/or child welfare agency that there is a threat to a child in its jurisdiction. Alert local law enforcement that a perpetrator of child abuse is living in, or moving to its jurisdiction. This is similar to calling a Child Abuse Hotline in the USA;
- Relative Tracing-Family Notification: Locating a family member to notify her/him that a minor relative is in the care of CP&P and/or to determine if the family member is interested in participating in permanency planning for the child, including being considered as a placement option;

- Relative Tracing-Termination of Parental Rights: Locating a parent to serve TPR;
- Relative Tracing-Temporary Restraining Order: Locating a relative to serve a Temporary Restraining Order;
- Repatriating U.S. citizens from abroad, including unaccompanied minors;
- Technical assistance on a wide variety of international child welfare issues, and;
- Training for legal and social services personnel working with children with an international dimension to their cases.

ISS-USA does not provide the following:

- Translation of documents from DCF, CP&P into the language of the country where they will be sent;
- Translation into English of documents received from ISS Units abroad;
- Funds for DCF, CP&P staff to travel to visit a child in DCF-CP&P custody living abroad;
- Funds to bring children back to the United States after an overseas placement;
- Funds to bring family members from abroad for court hearings or to take custody of a child in DCF, CP&P;
- Legal advice; and
- Home studies in Hague adoption cases.

Referring to and Opening a Case with ISS-USA 10-15-2012

When referring a case to ISS-USA, a need of services in a foreign country for a child or family is identified, and the following steps take place:

1. The CP&P Worker completes a [CP&P Form 15-11](#), New Jersey Referral Form for Services with ISS-USA.
2. The CP&P Worker submits the ISS-USA Referral Form to the DCF International Liaison at international-liaison@dcf.state.nj.us.

3. The DCF IL reviews the form to make sure it is properly completed and forwards the completed referral to the ISS-USA Case Manager.
4. The ISS-USA Case Manager sends an acknowledgement letter to the CP&P Worker that the case is opened.

If ISS-USA is unable to open a case, ISS sends a request for additional information to the CP&P Worker. In the event that the CP&P Worker has no additional information, ISS-USA will send a formal acknowledgement letter stating they are unable to open the case at this time.

The most common reasons ISS-USA are unable to open a case referred by CP&P are:

- Insufficient information about the individual(s) being traced;
- The service requested is not a service that the correspondent can complete;
- Natural or manmade disasters, including war, flooding, earthquakes;
- No available ISS Unit or contractor in the country where service is being requested.

Managing a Case with ISS-USA 10-15-2012

Once the case is open with ISS-USA, the CP&P Worker provides the ISS Case Manager with any additional information as requested. The ISS Case Manager forwards all information to the ISS Branch, bureau, or correspondent in the country where service is needed. The ISS Case Manager will provide at least monthly updates on the case(s) to the CP&P Worker. The CP&P Worker is to respond to all e-mails and phone calls from the ISS Case Manager in a timely manner, within 48 hours, whenever possible.

CP&P Workers must contact the ISS Case Manager, and copy the International Liaison when there is a change in the case, including:

- Upcoming court date(s);
- Securing other permanency plans;
- New information is obtained related to the service requested or individuals involved in the case;
- Changing or canceling a service request;

- Birth of a sibling;
- Closing a case at CP&P.

If an additional service is required after the initial service request has been completed, the CP&P Worker must complete a new referral form to request any additional service. Any decision to place a child considers the child's needs, and the resources and strengths of the potential placement family. CP&P is unable to provide ongoing financial or medical coverage for children placed outside the US who are not adopted, so special medical, educational or mental health needs, including medication, become the responsibility of the receiving family.

If a child is placed outside of the United States, and custody is transferred to the caregiver or relative, the CP&P Worker must request, from ISS-USA, any supportive services required to ensure that the child's needs are met and the living arrangement remains stable. These services must be requested through the receiving country, with at least two reports received from the supervising agency. These reports address the child's adjustment in the home and overall well-being, including health, mental health, relationships and educational progress.

The International Liaison, Interstate Services Unit, continues to monitor the case if there is no legal requirement, such as a court order, to keep it open within the local office. The Case Manager at ISS receives and reviews the reports requested prior to placement pertaining to the family and services provided to the child. The ISS Case Manager forwards the reports to the International Liaison. If any child welfare or protective services concerns are noted in these reports, the ISS Case Manager requests that the local ISS correspondent provides a child welfare or protective services assessments, and advises the DCF International Liaison of the situation.

ISS-USA provides information on what services are available in which countries. These services may include:

- A post placement report to ensure the safety of the child; and
- Assistance from the correspondent in finding local social service providers (only available in some countries).

NOTE: CP&P Workers are never to have any direct communication with the ISS branch in the foreign country or the local child welfare agency in the foreign country. All correspondence must go through the ISS Case Manager with a copy to the Interstate Services Unit, DCF International Liaison.

If the service requested by CP&P from ISS-USA is not completed when CP&P is ready to close the case with the child:

- The CP&P Worker submits [CP&P Form 15-12](#), ISS-USA Case Closing Form, to the Interstate Services Unit, DCF International Liaison;
- The DCF International Liaison reviews the form and submits the completed [CP&P Form 15-12](#), ISS-USA Case Closing Form, to the ISS Case Manager after all of the post-placement reports pertaining to the case have been received.;
- The ISS Case Manager closes the case.

If the service requested by CP&P from ISS-USA is completed and CP&P is not ready to close the case on the child:

- The DCF International Liaison monitors the case quarterly until the case is closed;
- When CP&P closes the case on a child, the DCF IL reviews the CP&P case notes and fills out the [CP&P Form 15-12](#), ISS-USA Case Closing Form;
- The DCF IL submits the completed [CP&P Form 15-12](#), ISS-USA Case Closing Form to the ISS-Case Manager;
- The ISS Case Manager closes the case.

Placement out of country does not occur until the completed home study has been received and post placement service arrangements made.

If custody is awarded and the CP&P case is closed, or in cases where a court ordered placement occurs prior to the receipt of the home study, the DCF International Liaison and the ISS Case Manager continue to review the post placement reports for a minimum of six months to ensure that appropriate follow-up is provided.

Contact the DCF International Liaison 10-15-2012

A CP&P Worker contacts the DCF International Liaison when:

- Opening a new case (includes gathering information);

- Asking a question regarding the ISS-USA Referral and Case Closing forms;
- Requesting information about document translation services for documents originating from CP&P or received by CP&P from ISS-USA;
- Requesting that a case be expedited;
- Needing assistance with other international dimensions to the case, i.e., resources or services not provided by ISS-US;
- Submitting a [CP&P Form 15-12](#), ISS-USA Case Closing Form.

Translation and Interpretation Services 10-15-2012

All documents in a foreign language received from or sent to kin must be translated into or from English into the native language of the individual expected to read or respond to the document. Local translation providers and resources can be identified through the Area and Local Offices.

Contact your:

- DCF International Liaison;
- Resource Development Specialist;
- Case Practice Specialist;
- Supervisory Staff.

When working with a family outside the United States, who does not speak English, a CP&P Worker can:

- Request a Language Line Interpreter;
- Use bilingual staff;
- Share available language resources (court interpreter, pro bono attorney, etc.).

See [CP&P-II-C-3-300](#), Foreign Language Interpreters.